Land, agriculture and racial inequality in South West Africa

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Introduction

In this article, I describe the way in which land apportionment and the evolution of agricultural policies in South West Africa reflected both the emergence of a technically advanced and bureaucratically sophisticated agricultural bureaucracy while consolidating an agro-economy defined by racially structured inequality. Patterns of land allocation and state support for commercial livestock raising were established by German administrators and extended by subsequent South African regimes, resulting in land-holding arrangements that favored white settlers. Agricultural extension services were developed that provided a world-class quality of infrastructural support. At the same time, the politicization of agricultural policy would be later reflected in the South Africa-led redistricting of South West Africa into ethnically defined territories that were denied agricultural extension support, while the implementation of a veterinary cordon fence ('red line') to protect healthy commercial-area cattle similarly assumed a highly charged political and racialist character.

Overall, this study makes clear how the historical development of agricultural bureaucracy-building and policy-making in South West Africa reflected overall patterns that were fundamentally similar to other southern African white-settler

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states - such as South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe[1] - but also proved distinctive, particularly regarding the manner in which agricultural institutions were constructed, the nature of (first) German (and then) South African control over the South West African state, and the particularistic evolution of the so-called 'red line.'

Land settlement

South West Africa was ruled first by imperial Germany (1884 - 1915), and then, after Germany lost control of its African holdings during World War I, by South Africa (1915-1989). Through the course of the initial decades of colonial rule, the German (and then) South Africa-appointed administration in South West Africa embarked on the systematic removal of black Africans from large tracts of high-quality grazing areas.[2] This process was begun by the German colonial government in the late 1890s and was sustained by that government through the first decade of the 1900s, when wars against Herero and Nama communities resulted in their dispersal from indigenous lands throughout what is today eastern, southern and central Namibia.[3] Most of these land areas were then sub-divided into private farmlands (and, to a lesser extent, government owned land tracts).[4] Thus, several hundred private farms were distributed to German settlers between 1909 and 1915.[5]

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1. See M. LIPTON, *Capitalism and apartheid: South Africa 1910-1986* (Aldershot: Wildwood, 1986); J. HERBST, *State politics in Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); J. LUKANTY and A.P. WOOD, 'Agricultural policy in the colonial period,' in A.P. WOOD, S.A. KEAN, J.T. MILIMO, D.M. WARREN, (Eds.), *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform in Zambia* (Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 1990).

2. W. WERNER, 'A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 19(1), March 1993, pp. 135-146. See also, L. CLIFFE with R. BUSH, J. LINDSAY, B. MOKOPAKGOSI, D. PANKHURST, and B. TSIE, *The Transition to Independence in Namibia* (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1994), p. 14; C. LEYS, J. SAUL, S. BROWN, P. STEENKAMP, S.S. MASEKO, C.TAPSCOTT, and L.DOBELL, *Namibia's liberation struggle: the two-edged sword* (Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 1995), pp. 8-9.

3. T. DEDERING, 'The German-Herero War of 1904: Revisionism of Genocide or Imaginary Historiography?,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19(1), March 1993, pp. 80-88; D. Soggot, *Namibia: the violent heritage* (Rex Collings, London, 1986); H. BLEY, *South West Africa under German rule* (Heinemann, London, 1971); H. DRECHSLER, *Let us die fighting* (Zed Press, London, 1980).

4. J.B. FORREST, *Namibia's post-Apartheid regional institutions* (University of Rochester Press, Rochester, N.Y., 1998), p. 29.

5. *Ibid*.; F. ADAMS and W. WERNER (with P. VALE), *The land issue in Namibia: an inquiry* (Namibia Institute for Social and Economic Research, Windhoek, 1990), pp. 10-16; W. WERNER, 'A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 19(1), March 1993, pp. 140.

In the 1920s and 1930s, South African administrators expanded the land acquisition process through the greater part of the central and southern regions of South West Africa, with most of the new settlers in those decades being white South African immigrants.[6] A small number of these settlers received additional land parcels in the 1940s and 1950s.[7] Individual white farmers obtained tracts of land ranging in size from 3,000 or 4,000 hectares up to as much as 20,000 or 30,000 hectares. In this process, Nama and Herero communities were crowded onto relatively small enclaves, called 'native reserves,' in the central and southern regions in order to make room for the white-owned commercial farmlands.[8]

In a broad sense, South West Africa's land restructurings mirrored that of other colonial settler states of southern Africa - Kenya, Zambia, Botswana [Bechuanaland], Zimbabwe [Rhodesia], and South Africa: great tracts of the country's best farmland were ear-marked for sale by the colonial government to white farmer settlers or for use by the government itself. As of the 1920s, the land sites reserved for black Africans came to be known as native reserves in these colonies.[9] However, in South West Africa, a distinction should be drawn between the native reserves within the so-called 'police zone,' i.e., the vast portion of central and southern areas settled by whites and controlled by the central administration, and the far northern reserves (Kaokoland, Ovamboland, Kavango, Caprivi) which were left largely intact. The police zone native reserves were small and overcrowded, generally being located inbetween large white-dominated areas.[10]

Moreover, in South West Africa's native reserves located within the police zone, marketing restrictions, low quality soil and colonial regulations reduced the quality of life and rendered black Africans highly dependent on cash-market commodity

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6. J.B. FORREST, *Namibia's post-Apartheid regional institutions,* pp. 30-31; B. LAU and P. REINER, *100 years of agricultural development in colonial Namibia: a historical overview of visions and experiments,* (The National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek, 1993), p. 52; F. ADAMS and W. WERNER (with P. VALE), *The land issue in Namibia: an inquiry,* pp. 10-16.

7. B. LAU and P. REINER, *100 years of agricultural development in colonial Namibia: a historical overview of visions and experiments,* pp. 53-54; F. ADAMS and W. WERNER (with P. VALE), *The land issue in Namibia: an inquiry,* pp. 20-24; W. WERNER, 'A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 19(1), March 1993, pp.143-145.

8. F. ADAMS and W. WERNER (with P. VALE), *The land issue in Namibia: an inquiry,* pp. 26-37. See also J.B. FORREST, *Namibia's post-Apartheid regional institutions*, ch. one, for a discussion of this process with specific reference to chiefly authority and regional structures.

9. J. LUKANTY AND A. P. WOOD, 'Agricultural policy in the colonial period,' in A.P. WOOD, S.A. KEAN, J.T. MILIMO, D.M. WARREN, (Eds.), *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform in Zambia*, pp. 3-19, 8.

10. J.B. FORREST, *Namibia's post-Apartheid regional institutions*, p. 31.

ties. In addition, blacks suffered the imposition of pass laws and other forms of mobility control, leading to increasing dependency on the white-dominated sectors of the economy. A central facet of this dependency was the ever-growing number of blacks working for a very low wage, or sometimes for merely food provisions, for mining companies or on white-owned farms in the central and southern regions.[11]

The reserves in the far north (Ovamboland, Kavango, Caprivi, Kaokoland) were not settled by whites but did become tightly integrated into the settler-capitalist economy, dramatized by growing labor outflows of mineworkers and agricultural laborers.[12] Within these reserves - later called 'communal areas' - chiefs who collaborated with central administration officials often facilitated the out-flow of young men for use by settler-farmers as laborers or by mining companies as mineworkers. This was especially the case regarding the far northern native reserve of Ovamboland following a military 'pacification' campaign carried out in the late 1910s,[13] after which a labor out-migration pattern was systematized through the 1920s-1950s.[14]

As in the case of Kenya and Rhodesia,[15] central state bureaucratic institutions in South West Africa provided substantial fiscal and infrastructural support to settler commercial livestock farmers from the 1940s through the 1980s. Extension assistance from the Windhoek-based Department of Agriculture and Department of

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11. L. CLIFFE with R. BUSH, J. LINDSAY, B. MOKOPAKGOSI, D. PANKHURST, and B. TSIE, *The Transition to Independence in Namibia*, pp. 15-17; C. LEYS and J.S. SAUL, 'Introduction,' in C. LEYS, J. SAUL, S. BROWN, P. STEENKAMP, S.S. MASEKO, C.TAPSCOTT, and L.DOBELL, *Namibia's liberation struggle: the two-edged sword,* pp. 1-18, pp. 8-10; and C. TAPSCOTT, 'War, Peace and Social Classes,' in Leys and Saul (1995): 153-170, p. 154. In these regards, South West Africa's early economic history closely paralleled that of Kenya and South Africa. For the case of Kenya, see R. VAN ZWANENBERG, *An economic history of Kenya and Tanzania: 1800-1970* (Macmillan, London, 1975), and E.A. BRETT, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa: The Politics of Economic Change: 1919-1939*, (NOK Publishers, New York, 1973).

12. P. HAYES, J. SILVESTER, M. WALLACE, W. HARTMANN, (Eds.), *Namibia under South African rule: mobility and containment 1915-1946* (James Currey, Oxford, 1998).

13. P. HAYES, 'Order Out of Chaos: Mandume Ya Ndemufayo and Oral History' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19(1), March 1993, pp. 89-113; F-N. WILLIAMS, *Precolonial Communities of Southwestern Africa. A History of Ovambo Kingdoms 1600-1920* (National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek, 1991); W. WERNER, 'A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 19(1), March 1993, pp. 135-136.

14. R. MOORSOM, 'Underdevelopment, Contract Labour and Worker Consciousness in Namibia,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 4(1) (1977).

15. D.K. LEONARD, *African successes: four public managers of Kenyan rural developmen* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Ca.,1991), p. 36.

Veterinary Services assured that world-class standards of animal health regulation, disease control, vaccination, and the provision of fodder was provided in drought years. Significant financial aid from the Windhoek-based Agricultural Bank [Landbou] was made available through low interest loans and credit programs for the purpose of farm development,[16] similarly to the fiscal support provided to commercial farmers in other settler-states, such as Zambia.[17]

Meanwhile, the aforementioned racial separatist policies in regard to farm settlement had produced a bifurcated agricultural sector in which a relative handful of white farmers were in possession of half the country's grazing land. By the end of the colonial era, there were 6,337 private farms in the 'commercial' sector owned by a total of 4,450 farmers.[18] The average size of each of these white-owned farms was 7,836 hectares.[19] Commercial farmland comprised a total of 32.3 million hectares.[20] By contrast, the total size of the communal areas was 33.3 million hectares.[21] This was similar to the dual structure that emerged in Zambia, where, at independence, 1,200 households were operating large farms up to 5,000 hectares in size, with 300,000 Africans raising livestock on smallholdings.[22]

What assured the consolidation of the communal-commercial division in South West Africa was the fact that all land in the communal areas was technically considered state property and could not be owned privately. Reflecting this principle, the Department of Agriculture defined a 'farmer' as anyone who has cattle - a definition which explicitly avoided linking a farmer to his land.[23] Thus, rural black Africans were for the most part perceived and treated as potential

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16. Interviews, Deputy Manager, Agricultural Bank of Namibia, Windhoek, 10 September 1993; General Manager, Namibian Agronomic Board, Windhoek, 18 October 1993; and Chief Executive, Namibia Agricultural Union, Windhoek, 15 November 1993.

17. See, for example, J. LUKANTY and A.P. WOOD, 'Agricultural policy in the colonial period,' in A.P. WOOD, S.A. KEAN, J.T. MILIMO, D.M. WARREN, (Eds.), *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform in Zambia*, pp. 13-14.

18. NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION/CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE, Statistical abstract (Windhoek, 1992), Table 7.2, p. 56 [Original source cited: Ministry of Agriculture, Water and rural development]; P. BELLI, *Namibia: poverty alleviation with sustainable growth* (D.C.: World Bank, Washington, 1992), p. 12.

19. P. BELLI, *Namibia: poverty alleviation with sustainable growth*, p. 12.

20. *Ibid*., p. 12.

21. *Ibid*, p. xv.

22. J. LUKANTY and A.P. WOOD, 'Agricultural policy in the colonial period,' in A.P. WOOD, S.A. KEAN, J.T. MILIMO, D.M. WARREN, (Eds.), *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform in Zambia*, p. 17.

23. Interviews, Deputy Director, Extension & Engineering Services, Windhoek Office, 18 November 1993; Deputy Director, Veterinary Services, Windhoek, 13 December 1993.

laborers whose agricultural and veterinary productivity and livestock marketing potential were of relatively minor concern to state authorities (except regarding the spread of animal disease to settler-commercial farms), despite the fact that most villagers were actively engaged in cattle raising and crop growing.

The agricultural bureaucracy and the extension service

While racial and political factors to a large extent determined the evolutionary contour of agriculture and land distribution in South West Africa, it was also the case that the government was able to construct a modern, efficient and competent agricultural bureaucracy. Agrarian technicians and husbandry specialists helped commercial farmers to implement effective land management and led to the development of a highly supportive cattle-growing infrastructure.

The overall professionalization and specialization of the civil service bureaucracy had been assured and was rapidly advanced during the 1905-1915 period under German rule, beginning with the administration of Governor Lindequist.[24] After 1915, the highest-level members of the South West African civil servants were appointed directly by Pretoria (the Southern Africa High Commission), but much of the public bureaucracy became functionally autonomous in subsequent decades.[25] This included the agronomic and veterinary units of government which provided the bureaucratic basis for the expansion and extension of the government's support for commercial agriculture during the 1920s-1950s. By that point, the agricultural bureaucracy of South West Africa consisted of a well-staffed Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation, which was sub-divided into the Directorate of Agriculture, the Directorate of Veterinary Services, and Nature Conservation.

By the 1960s, the agricultural directorates had each developed their own particularistic modus operandi, patterns of staff relations, rules of behavior, bureaucratic cultures and systems of technical training. South West Africa's agricultural directorates were characterized by an enduring commitment to implementing modern standards of agricultural extension service support, livestock disease control, bovine and small stock research, and on-farm herd management techniques. Each of the two major directorates was headed by a Deputy Director -

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24. B. LAU and P. REINER, *100 years of agricultural development in colonial Namibia: a historical overview of visions and experiments*, pp. 5-10; C. STERN and B. LAU, *Namibian water resources and their management: a preliminary history* (The National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek, 1990); H. BLEY, *South-West Africa under German rule 1894-1914* (Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1971), p. 234.

25. J.B. FORREST, *Namibia's post-Apartheid regional institutions*, p. 32.

so that there was a Deputy Director of Agriculture and a Deputy Director of Veterinary Services - both being responsible to the Director of Agriculture.[26] Each directorate tended to operate in relative isolation from the others, reinforcing a sense not only of institutional insularity but also intense pride among agricultural officials regarding their distinctive roles in assuring the success of South West Africa's commercial agricultural sector.[27]

However, the relatively autonomous development of the agricultural bureaucracy of South West Africa came to an abrupt halt on 1 April 1969, when South Africa re-asserted full control over the South West African state, beginning what many Namibians refer to as the 'South Africa' period.[28] This shift to a more direct administrative structure took place so that South Africa would be able to assure the implementation of a strict division of territories along ethnic lines in South West Africa. Direct administrative control by Pretoria remained in force from 1969 to 1980, during which time South Africa's own governmental agencies were accorded responsibility for the South West African agricultural directorates, including the extension service.[29] All employees of South West African agricultural and veterinary government services became incorporated into the South African civil service.[30]

In 1969, as part of this process, the central government's Deputy Director of Agriculture and Deputy Director of Veterinary Services were in effect transferred to Pretoria. The directorates of Agriculture and of Veterinary Services of South West Africa became part of the South African government.[31] Thus, in the 1970s, the names of agricultural and veterinary personnel in South West Africa were indicated in South Africa's official listings of agricultural research and extension workers.[32]

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26. Interview, former State Veterinarian and former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Rural Development, Windhoek, 4 November 1993.
27. Interviews, former Agricultural Extension Officers: Hardap Region, 24 May 1993, Mariental, Gobabis, 8 July 1993, and Okahao, 25 August 1993.
28. J.B. FORREST, *Namibia's post-Apartheid regional institutions,* p. 33.
29. Interview, former State Veterinarian and former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Rural Development, Windhoek, 4 November 1993.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (Forthwith R OF SA), Official List of Professional Research Workers, Lecturing Staff and Extension Workers in the Agricultural Field, Department of Agricultural Technical Services, Republic of South Africa & South West Africa, January 1979, pp. 37-38; Official List of Professional Research Workers, Lecturing Staff and Extension Workers in the Agricultural Field, Department of Agricultural Technical Services, Republic of South Africa, July 1976, p. 34.

Meanwhile, South Africa would proceed to set up 'homeland' governments on a territorial and ethnic basis in the communal areas. In conformity with South Africa's apartheid strategy of separate ethnic and racial development, these homeland areas were considered off-limits to the central government of South West Africa.[33] The South West African central government's responsibilities toward the communal areas were virtually eliminated, and its overall policy responsibilities became severely reduced. All decisions regarding South West Africa's agricultural, land and water policies were now in the hands of South Africa. The South West African Department of Water Affairs, for example, had been actively engaged in water supply development in many of the communal areas, but civil servants from that department were forced to depart from those areas. Thus, in these communal areas land, agriculture and water came to be controlled by South Africa's - rather than South West Africa's - central government ministries.

Although each South West African homeland government had established a separate mini-department of agriculture, their decisions regarding agriculture could be instantly overturned by Pretoria. Moreover, beginning in 1980, South Africa established a new regional policy within South West Africa (AG 8) through which the segregationist policies in the communal areas were in fact strengthened. Second tier authorities were organized only on the basis of ethnic identity - rather than on a strictly territorial basis - and were provided with budgetary contributions by the South West African central government.[34] At the same time as this ethnic policy was implemented (as of 1980), the South Africans would reduce and terminate its direct control over the South West African central administration. This resulted in part from growing pressure on Pretoria by the international community to release its stranglehold over Namibia. Thus, in the 1980s the Directorate of Agriculture, Directorate of Veterinary Service and Department of Water Affairs employees - who had been working as South African civil servants - now had to choose between remaining within the South African civil service, and thereby being transferred to South Africa itself, or accepting a so-called transfer back to the central government service of South West Africa. Most Windhoek-originated employees chose to return to the employ of the government of South West Africa.[35]

The most significant aspect of the change was administrative: the de facto employer of agricultural and veterinary officials and extension agents now formally

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33. In the far northern communal areas, the South African army engaged in warfare with SWAPO troops while also terrorizing local villagers in intimidation campaigns. See C. LEYS, J. SAUL, S. BROWN, P. STEENKAMP, S.S. MASEKO, C.TAPSCOTT, and L.DOBELL, *Namibia's liberation struggle: the two-edged sword.*.

34. J.B. FORREST, *Namibia's post-Apartheid regional institutions*, pp. 35-40.

35. Interviews, former State Veterinarian, Windhoek, 4 November 1993, and former Deputy Directors of Agricultural Extension, Windhoek, 9 and 18 November 1993.

became the Windhoek central administration, with each South West African department, including agriculture and veterinary services, regaining its respective decision-making autonomy. Thus, the Directorate of Agriculture and the Directorate of Veterinary Services were re-joined into the South West African Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation. In this way, the bureaucratic structure which had prevailed prior to 1969 was to a large extent re-established in 1980. The Directorate of Veterinary Services now became one of four directorates of the new Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation.[36] This Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation was headed, as of 1984, by Herbert Schneider, the former director of Veterinary Services, whose new post was titled Principal Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation.[37] Two years later, in 1986, Nico de Klerk, who had worked as an extension officer for the Administration for Whites (as from 1967), was appointed head of the central government's Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation.[38]

However, here the historical record becomes more complex: in 1980 commercial farmers were provided with their own second-tier authority, the Administration for Whites - just as black African ethnic groups had each been assigned their own respective second tier authority. The agricultural department of the Administration for Whites was accorded a highly trained staff and significant institutional, technical and financial resources.[39] The white commercial farming sector was henceforth served by two different agricultural departments: the Department of Agriculture of the Administration for Whites, and the Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation of the central government. Of the two, the Administration for Whites' Department of Agriculture received more generous levels of funding (from both the central government and from South Africa) than did the central government's own Department of Agriculture.[40] The Administration for Whites' Department of Agriculture was staffed by greater numbers of agricultural technicians, and it was the Administration for Whites which provided all the extension agents (numbering 23) who serviced the commercial (white-dominated)

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36. H.P. SCHNEIDER, *Animal health and veterinary medicine in Namibia* (Agrivet, Windhoek, 1994), p. 240.

37. Interview, former State Veterinarian, Windhoek, 4 November 1993, and see Schneider (1994), p. 243.

38. Interview, Director of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and rural development, Windhoek, 5 July 1993.

39. Interview, Under Secretary, Department of Human Relations, Office of the Prime Minister, Windhoek, 25 March 1993.

40. Interviews, former Deputy Director: Agricultural Extension and Development, Windhoek,

25. October 1993, and former State Veterinarian and Director of the Department of Agriculture, 4 November 1993.

areas in the 1980-1989 period.[41] The Administration for Whites developed a reputation for technical excellence, largely reflecting their ability to purchase high-tech equipment as well as the experience of the agricultural extension officers.[42] In addition to administering health services and other programs to assure livestock health and overall farm management, in 1986 a program was instituted to train commercial farmers in financial auditing and on-farm administration.[43]

The principal activity of the central government's extension staff was relatively modest: to enforce the Soil Conservation Act, which regulated the nature of soil use - for example in specifying that grazing land was not to be used inappropriately (i.e., for non-grazing activities). The central administration's Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation also carried out some agricultural research, but it was the Administration for Whites' research stations, farms, and two agricultural colleges which carried out most of the significant veterinary research.[44]

Still, the central administration's Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation - totaling 2,127 employees in 1983 and 2,142 in 1986[45] - did provide commercial farmers with financial and institutional assistance.

Indeed, combining the loans provided by the Administration for Whites and the central government, South West Africa's commercial farming sector received a generous level of fiscal support in the 1980-1989 period. The Administration for Whites provided a separate set of loans to the commercial agricultural sector totaling N$48.9 million in 1985, N$74.4 million in 1986, N$88.1 million in 1987, and N$93.2 million in 1988.[46] Loans advanced by the central government's Agricultural Bank to the commercial agricultural sector totaled N$85.9 million in 1985, N$98.7 million in 1986, N$102.9 million in 1987, and N$108.2 million in 1988.[47] In 1990, analysis of the central government's Agricultural Bank revealed a total of 1,909 separate loan accounts with commercial farmers.[48] Furthermore, according to a calculation carried out by World Bank economists, the subsidies on

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41. Ibid.
42. Interviews, former Deputy Directors of Agricultural Extension, Windhoek, 9 and 18 November 1993.
43. Interview, former Agricultural Extension Technician, Hardap Region, Mariental, 24 May 1993.
44. Ibid.
45. ANON., *Namibia: poverty alleviation with sustainable growth* (D.C.: World Bank, Washington, 1992), table III.2e, p. 127. Figures for the Administration for Whites are not available.
46. *Ibid.,* Table VII.1i, 'Namibia: Outstanding Loans to the Commercial Agricultural Sector, by Source and Year, 1981-1989,' p. 148. The 1988 figure is an estimate.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*

agricultural credit (including long-term farm mortgages) provided to the commercial agricultural sector by the Administration for Whites, the central government and the Agricultural Bank totaled N$16.4 million in 1985, N$11.4 million in 1986, N$10.1 million in 1987, N$15.7 million in 1988, N$24.0 million in 1989, and N$27.1 million in 1990.[49]

According to one analyst, the costs involved in making this institutional investment by the South West African state in commercial agriculture exceeded the resultant state profits from the commercial agricultural sector.[50] That is, the South West African state spent more money on extension services, veterinary programs and other agricultural sector investments than it was able to recoup through taxes on the commercial livestock trade. This argument finds its parallel in the Kenyan case, where the same argument has been made in regard to the Kenyan colonial state's support for white settler-controlled commercial farming.[51] What this suggests, in South West Africa as in colonial Kenya, was the extent to which agricultural policy-making and the institutional development of the agricultural bureaucracy reflected not only the economic interests of the settler-dominated livestock sector but also the state's political interests in devoting its resources to an exclusive, racially defined segment of the nation's populace.

This can best be appreciated by analyzing the infrastructural support provided during the same time period (1980-1989) within the communal areas. There, each of the second tier authorities had established its own Department of Agriculture and was responsible for hiring its own agricultural extension officers. In practice, these were tiny units lacking trained staff, and the second tier governments did not invest their resources in agricultural extension activities.[52] While colonial settler states in Zambia and Kenya had begun to extend some agricultural extension services to the most successful African commercial farmers prior to those countries' independence

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49. *Ibid*., table VII.1j, 'Namibia: Subsidies on Agricultural Credit, 980-1990,' p. 149. These figures were calculated on the basis of the interest rates of agricultural loans provided by the Administration for Whites and by the Agricultural Bank set against the standard commercial bank interest rate for each year.

50. W. SCHMOKEL, 'The myth of the white farmer: Commercial agriculture in Namibia, 1900-1993,' in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 18(1),1985.

51. C. LEYS, *Underdevelopment in Kenya* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Ca.,1974), pp. 37, 87-88.

52. Interviews: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Windhoek, 26 May 1993; Agricultural Extension Officer for Maltahöhe district, Maltahöhe, 1 July 1993; Director of Rural Development, Windhoek, July 5, 1993; former agricultural extension officer, Gobabis, 8 July 1993.

from Britain,[53] this occurred only minimally in the case of South West Africa. The creation of separate homelands in fact helped to consolidate a process of disengagement of the central state from infrastructural support for black African farmers.

Some of these second tier authorities were able to contract out for extension services - that is, enter into limited term agreements with the extension service of the Administration for Whites or with the central administration to provide extension services to their respective communal area.[54] That was especially the case with regard to Namaland, Hereroland, and Tswanaland. As a result, the central government's Directorate of Agriculture did hire a small number of extension staff to work in in Hereroland, Tswanaland and Namaland communities.[55] These extension staff were usually individuals selected from within their respective communities, but they had received minimal (if any) technical training and were provided with few resources.[56] Thus, the extent of extension services provided within the communal areas was piecemeal at best; few farmers benefitted from the existence of these programs. When a Chief Extension Officer took her first tour of the rural extension service just after independence in Reheboth and Omaheke regions, she observed that the extension agents posted there had no idea what to do and were 'totally unorganized.'[57]

Moreover, the far northern regions received virtually no extension assistance from the central government or from the Administration for Whites.[58] In the north, only the Ovamboland second tier government had sufficient resources to establish an agricultural extension office, but limited resources prevented significant extension support. During the fifteen years that the Ovamboland government was in power, a small extension bureau was set up in the town of Ondangwa, and the Ogongo Agricultural College was created, but these were inadequately financed and were

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53. For Zambia, see A.P. WOOD, 'Agricultural policy since independence,' in A.P. WOOD, S.A. KEAN, J.T. MILIMO, D.M. WARREN, (Eds.), *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform in Zambia*, pp. 21-58, p. 27; See D.K. LEONARD, *African successes: four public managers of Kenyan rural development,* p. 36.

54. Interview, Chief Agricultural Extension Officer for former Hereroland and Reheboth, MAWRD, Windhoek, 8 September 1993.

55. Interviews: Senior Agricultural Extension Officer, Tsandi/Uukwaluudhi, 16 August 1993; and former Senior Manager for Operations, AGRA, Windhoek, 9 September 1993.

56. Interview, Chief Agricultural Extension Officer for former Hereroland and Reheboth, 8 September 1993.

57. Ibid.

58. Interview, Chief Agricultural Extension Officer, Ondangwa, 5 August 1993.

barely functional in the 1980s.[59] During that time, there were fewer than five agricultural extension officers in all of Ovamboland - which contained about half a million people - and only two officers were posted to rural areas (the other three were in Ondangwa).[60] We may also mention that the prevalence of warfare in the countryside would have seriously hindered any effort at agricultural extension work that might have been undertaken.

The evolution of government bureaucratic support structures during the apartheid period of the 1980s in fact was clearly characterized by a disjointed policy. Commercial area extension staff and farmers received training, funds and additional support which dwarfed those received by farmers and extension personnel in the communal areas. By comparison, the disparity in the ratio of support services between the commercial and communal farming areas in apartheid-era South West Africa was likely much greater than in other southern African settler colonies such as Zambia, where the commercial-communal disparity was estimated at a relatively modest 3:1 differential.[61]

The veterinary cordon fence

This historical overview of the evolution of South West Africa's agricultural policy and bureaucracy has been centered on two themes: the racially demarcated politicization of agricultural development, and the technical excellence of the country's agronomic and veterinary specialists. These themes can be furthermore appreciated by tracing the historical construction of farm fences and a veterinary cordon fence, which represented a central component of the agricultural policy of the South West African government.

The origin of the veterinary cordon fence can be pinpointed to the outbreak of rinderpest, a highly infectious livestock disease, throughout southern Africa in 1896-97. At that point, there was no border control of the movement of animals between Angola and South West Africa.[62] In order to prevent the spread of this disease into the police zone, the German authorities established a series of control points initially along South West Africa's eastern border and then stretching east-

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59. *Ibid*., and Interview, Chief Agricultural Research Officer, Mahanene Research Station, 17 July 1993.

60. Interviews, Permament Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and rural development, Windhoek, 29 October 1993; former Deputy Director, Agricultural Extension & Engineering Services, 18 November 1993.

61. J. LUKANTY and A.P. WOOD, 'Agricultural policy in the colonial period,' in A.P. WOOD, S.A. KEAN, J.T. MILIMO, D.M. WARREN, (Eds.), *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform in Zambia*, pp. 3-19, 14.

62. Interview, Deputy Director, Veterinary Services, MAWRD, Windhoek, 13 December 1993.

to-west across the country's mid-section.[63] The areas in-between the control points were manned on foot and by horseback, with a maximum of several hundred soldiers stationed at the control points; no fencing existed at this time.[64] Livestock movement was prohibited by these foot and horse patrols to a considerable extent, but the lack of fencing made it impossible to oversee every segment of the control areas in a 24-hour period and many livestock crossings continued to occur.[65] As a result, rinderpest reached South West Africa in 1897 and killed hundreds of thousands of cattle and clove-hoofed livestock.[66]

The German South West African government was then at the beginning stages of forcing black Africans off their lands in the central and southern portions of the colony and closing off these areas for the purpose of white farmer settlement; the 1897 outbreak of rinderpest represented an enormous threat to the viability of the fledgling white-controlled commercial livestock sector. As the manned patrols were inadequate to prevent the spread of the disease, veterinarians, farmers, civil servants and German army personnel engaged in a massive livestock vaccination effort as of May 1897, and over the next year and half and were able to virtually eliminate the rinderpest. Only occasional outbreaks occurred after December 1897, with the disease being declared entirely absent from South West Africa by 1905.[67]

However, no fencing was as yet erected;[68] manned patrols were utilized through the duration of the German colonial period.[69] This meant that some livestock from Angola continued to be shepharded into the country; the South Africans, who had taken over those posts as of 1915, decided to build ordinary farm fences across a number of sections of South West Africa south of Etosha Pan, with these fences being constructed gradually through the 1920s-1950s.[70] A line of fences emerged in piecemeal fashion, creating an east-west division - although there were portions of

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63. H.P. SCHNEIDER, *Animal health and veterinary medicine in Namibia*, p. 150. This initial livestock control line ran east-west along the following control points: Epukiro, Waterberg, Otjituuo, Tsintsabis, Namutoni, Rietfontein, Okaukuejo, Cauas-Okawa, Huab and Tsawisis.
64. Interview, former state veterinarian [1965-1969], former Deputy Director for Veterinary Services [1977-1980], and former Director for Veterinary Services [1980-1984], Windhoek, 4 November 1993.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. H.P. SCHNEIDER, *Animal health and veterinary medicine in Namibia*, pp. 151-153.
68. Ibid.
69. Interview, former state veterinarian [1965-1969], former Deputy Director for Veterinary Services [1977-1980], and former Director for Veterinary Services [1980-1984], Windhoek, 4 November 1993.
70. Ibid.

this 'line' in isolated areas where there was no fence.[71] The full length of the farm fences came to be called the 'red line' because, on some government maps in the 1920s-1930s, the northern border of the police zone was marked in red and this 'red line' on the map coincided with the east-west farm fence. Officials increasingly referred to the length of the fencing as the 'red line' in their documents.[72] Cattle could not be transported south of the fences without authorization from the Windhoek-based Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS) of the South West African central government.[73]

Despite the constrictions of this red line, on 13 July 1961, an outbreak of foot and mouth cattle disease occurred in the commercial cattle zone of the central part of the country which a DVS official later described as 'worse than the rinderpest of 1897.'[74] It started about 60 kilometers to the east of Windhoek and spread very quickly - 'like wildfire' - to many commercial and communal areas in the principal districts of the police zone, including Windhoek, Gobabis, Rehoboth, Okahandja, Karibib, Omaruru, Outjo, Otjiwarongo, Grootfontein, Tsumeb and Hereroland. The disease led to a total shut-down of the meat and livestock export industry[75] - the bedrock of commercial agriculture. From August 1961 through the end of that year, South West Africa's cattle and small stock industry, which was almost entirely dependent on exports to South Africa, ceased to function in the wake of a total animal export ban. Even the lucrative karakul sheep industry, which relied on the export of sheep skins to Europe, was halted.[76]

The Directorate of Veterinary Services engaged in extensive efforts to control the disease as of the time of its appearance in July 1961, which included massive vaccinations, fortnightly inspections of infected farms, the creation of 80 square kilometer quarantine zones between diseased and disease-free areas, and the intensive patrolling of cordoned-off areas by DVS personnel - as many as 3,000 employees being mobilized at the height of the patrols.[77] Meanwhile, the Directorate of Veterinary Services raced to build a more solid, game-proof fence: a

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71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid. Karakul sheep farming was introduced into South West Africa in the first decade of the 1900s and remained a lucative industry, based in the southern regions, through the late 1980s, when animal rights activists in Europe succeeded in severely reducing the sales of Namibia's karakul sheep skins in Europe.
77. H.P. SCHNEIDER, *Animal health and veterinary medicine in Namibia*, p. 62.

veterinary cordon fence capable of containing this - and future - epidemics.[78] In contrast to the ordinary farm fences built in the 1920s-1950s, the veterinary cordon fencing being set up was higher (up to 2.6 meters) and thicker, as it was reinforced with double-stranded wire mesh.[79] From August 1961 through 1962, the DVS erected these gameproof veterinary cordon fences in four different giant quadrants - northern, eastern and western [both running along the southern border of Etosha National Park], and a southern quadrant.[80]

By December 1962, a total of 3,100 kilometers of gameproof fencing had been constructed.[81] The logic of the four-quadrant stategy was that if disease does spread among cattle in one quadrant, it would be less likely to spread to the other three.[82] Moreover, the DVS was able to progressively declare specific areas disease-free. Outbreaks recurred in early and mid-1962, but finally tapered off in July-August of that year, with the disease being fully eradicated by December 1962.[83] By that point the country was able to resume its cattle and beef exports.[84]

One important impact of this disease prevention policy was that the vast majority of black Africans in the far north henceforth found it impossible to transport cattle south of the red line (as the cordon fence was by now typically called) and to legally participate in the lucrative South Africa-oriented commercial beef and cattle export trade. As a result, the red line symbolized the state's enforcement of racial and economic privileges for white livestock farmers.

Moreover, as of the mid-1960s, the veterinary cordon fence came to be used by the South African military forces for political purposes. As the South African army established roadblocks in various rural areas, they began to use the fence crossings

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. The northern quadrant encompassed the entire northern section of the country starting from Etosha Pan; the eastern quadrant stretched from Windhoek north to Etosha and east to the ocean; the western quadrant stretched from Windhoek north to Etosha and west to Botswana; the southern quadrant encompassed all of the southern zone from Windhoek to the South African border.

81. H.P. SCHNEIDER, *Animal health and veterinary medicine in Namibia*, p. 63.

82. Interview, former state veterinarian [1965-1969], former Deputy Director for Veterinary Services [1977-1980], and former Director for Veterinary Services [1980-1984], Windhoek, 4 November 1993.

83. H.P. SCHNEIDER, *Animal health and veterinary medicine in Namibia*, p. 58. Some livestock and karakul exports had recommenced in early 1962, but only from specific, limited areas declared disease-free by the Directorate of Veterinary Services.

84. Ibid.

to inspect cars and people traveling north-south or south-north.[85] It was the use of the fence for this political purpose by the South African armed forces through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s that engendered an especially intensive, popular hatred among most Namibians for the fence. Thus, the 'red line' appelation came to assume stark political and racial connotations. People in the north resented the red line, viewing it not only as a reinforcement of racism in the economic sphere but also as a military weapon in South Africa's war against the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO, a popular political party). The politicization of the fence's use helps to explain why, after independence, black Namibians looked forward to the eventual elimination of the fence as symbolizing liberation in both the personal and economic spheres - the personal sphere here meaning freedom of movement unimpeded by security forces and economic liberation referring to the ability of herders to shepherd cattle to southerly marketing points.

Nonetheless, from the point of view of the technical specialists within the DVS, the central purpose of the veterinary cordon fence was to keep the cattle in the commercialized sector of the economy free from contagious diseases, especially lung disease and foot and mouth disease.[86] In this regard, the DVS was successful. However, the way in which the veterinary cordon fence was politicized helped to assure that it would be popularly regarded as emblematic of the stark racialization of the country's history of land settlement and of the government's agricultural policy. The political legacy of the 'red line' remains vibrant today, manifested not only through vigorous calls by Namibian politicians to relocate the cordon fence further northward, but also in the popular assumption that failure to do so represents the cumulative impact of a history of administrative decision-making traditionally oriented toward the economic marginalization of black African livestock herders.

Conclusions

In broad historical strokes, South West Africa's land settlement and agricultural policies through its German and South Africa periods resembled that of other settler-farmer states in southern Africa, with large commercial livestock farms

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85. Interviews: Director, Directorate of Veterinary Services, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Rural Development, Windhoek, 2 November 1993; former state veterinarian [1965-1969], former Deputy Director for Veterinary Services [1977-1980], and former Director for Veterinary Services [1980-1984], Windhoek, 4 November 1993.

86. Lung sickness, especially, is hard to detect, and difficult to eradicate. Foot and mouth disease is easier to detect but more difficult to control. Interviews: Director, Directorate of Veterinary Services, Windhoek, 23 November 1993; Deputy Director, Veterinary Services, Windhoek, 26 November 1993; Manager, Northern Communal Areas, Meatco [The Meat Corporation], Windhoek, 17 December 1993.

reserved for whites who were provided support and assistance through the central state's agricultural infrastructure. However, in South West Africa, the white-dominated 'police zone' was much larger than in Botswana, Zambia, Kenya or Zimbabwe, comprising well over half of South West Africa's grazing land. South West Africa was also marked by an unusual division of communal land areas between the tiny, overpopulated segments within the police zone and larger territories in the far north where blacks had not been removed from their land areas. Both types of communal land areas had been integrated into the settler colonial-capitalist system through a migrant labor system, but the far northern areas were especially distinguished by the near-total marginalization of their robust agronomic and livestock raising industries.

The historical trajectory of the communal areas proved especially complex – and unique – once the South African regime decided to establish apartheid-oriented territorial governments in each 'homeland,' which were transformed into 'second tier authorities' in 1980. This policy witnessed the political and administrative denuding of any possibility for establishing an agricultural support structure for communal area residents at the same time as fiscal loan provisions and agricultural extension infrastructures were infused into commercial farming areas. These measures aimed at simultaneously insuring the protection of the white-controlled livestock sector and further agricultural disenfranchisement of communal farmers; in these respects, the 1980s witnessed the historical culmination of a 90-year evolution of South West Africa's racially structured politicization of agriculture and land policy.

Meanwhile, the progression of administrative restructurings experienced by the agricultural and veterinary services of South West Africa set those services apart from South Africa's own experiences and from those of other settler states. The gradual, steady achievement of de facto bureaucratic autonomy by South West Africa's Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation and by the Directorate of Veterinary Services through the first six decades of the 1900s helped to assure that South West Africa's agricultural bureaucracy would sustain the organizational coherence, administrative know-how and institutional consistency necessary for its behavioral efficiency. The 1969-1980 period witnessed a sudden, forced incorporation of those agencies directly into the South African civil service, but this period proved sufficiently brief to avoid a catastrophic implosion on the part of South West Africa's agricultural and veterinary services. Indeed, those services continued to be characterized by their professionalism, implementational effectiveness, strong technical skills and the use of modern research technology to strengthen technical support services and improve other inputs provided to the commercial farming sector.

Nonetheless, these institutional achievements did not address the politicization of agriculture, which continued to reflect the segregationist policies initiated by

German administrators of South West Africa and expanded and intensified by Pretoria. Indeed, the historical account we provided of the evolution of the 'red line' serves as powerful symbolic and real-world testimony to the combined agricultural history of a highly proficient veterinary and agricultural bureaucracy along with the racialist politicization of livestock-raising. A progressive increase in the thickness and logistical arrangement of the veterinary cordon fence reflected technological advances achieved by the veterinary services in particular, and helped make possible the eradication of widespread livestock diseases. But the military use of the fence by South African security forces assured that it would henceforth serve as potent symbol of the inequitable and exploitative dividing line separating the privileged commercial sector from the marginalized communal areas.

In this respect, as in others described above, the agricultural policy process and agricultural bureaucracy-building in South West Africa were at all times imbued with race-consciousness, but in distinctive historical contours that reflected unusual shifts in administrative configuration. One of the country's most significant historical legacies, that of the persistence of organizational effectiveness on the part of the agricultural extension service and of the veterinary service, may well serve the post-independence government constructively in that government's effort to reverse the agriculturally related racial inequities inherited from South West Africa's difficult past.

Opsomming

Grond, landbou en rasse-ongelykheid in Suidwes-Afrika

Die nedersettingskolonie van Suidwes-Afrika het onder die Duitse en daarna die Suid-Afrikaanse bewind aansienlike grond herstrukturering ondergaan waardeur swartmense verplig was om in 'naturelle reservate' in die suidelike tweederde-gebied van die kolonie te woon. Die streek het afhanklik geword van die veeboerdery vir handel en lone. 'n Hoogs opgeleide doeltreffende en outonome landbou voorlingtingsdiens het omvattende insette aan blanke boere gelewer. Die diens is in 'n mindere mate aan sommige van die swart gemeenskapsgebiede voorsien. Die oorname van regstreekse Suid-Afrikaanse beheer oor die Suidwes-Afrikaanse burokrasie in 1969, tesame met die tuislandbeleid van apartheid, het plaaslike landbouspesialiste uit beide die blanke en swart gebied verdryf. Meeste blanke boere

was nie nadelig geraak nie. Die administrasie van blankes het voorsiening gemaak vir hul eie voorligtingsdienste. Swart boere het op hulle beurt slegs die minimum dienste ontvang. (Daarby moet in gedagte gehoue word dat die tuisland owerheid formeel daarvoor aansoek moes doen.) Intussen het die departement veeartsenydienste met die afbakening van ‘n rooilyn gedurende die twintigste eeu daarin geslaag om die grootste deel van die land van ernstige veesiektes af te sny. Dit dui op die doeltreffendheid van die departement. In die sestiger- en sewentigerjare het die kordonheining daartoe bygedra dat noordelike gemeenskapsgronde gemarginaliseer is. Dit het tot gevolg gehad dat heelwat ontevredenheid posgevat het.